

## 30 December 2004 Press Conference Transcript

**See Opening and Closing statements attached.**

**Arsim Lani from Lajm newspaper:** *You mentioned in your speech that you were prepared to react to any unlawful demonstration that may occur, I am interested to know why do you foresee for something like this to happen? Why do you think this?*

**BG Tod Carmony:** I think violent demonstrations are unlikely. However, as someone who is responsible for safe and secure in this sector and because of what happened on March 17<sup>th</sup> of this year; I feel it is important that I remind people that we are capable of responding and protecting lives and property. I think the people of Kosovo realize that violence will only put the political process back and that they are ready to move forward.

**Musli Berisha of Radio Tema:** *In your opening statement you mentioned that the people of Kosovo are capable of dealing with their own affairs and they should be allowed to do so. The question is that who is responsible for allowing the people of Kosovo to deal with their own affairs? Who is in charge?*

**BG Carmony:** That is very much a political question. I think that the people of Kosovo realize that they have been given additional responsibilities recently, the new government seems to be working hard on the hand over of various competencies and also standards. And I think the year 2005 will see further progress made on additional competencies turned over, made here. And I will leave those decisions left up to the international community and the people of Kosovo.

**Demush Zefi of Bota Sot:** *On statement of General chaqu that was made towards the citizens of Kosovo, he believes on turning the KPC forces into a defense force of Kosovo. He believes that the transformation of the force in to a defense force would help in the completion or achievement of the standard. How would you consider this as a military expert?*

**BG Carmony:** In our sector I find the KPC to be well lead and well managed. However the question of their future will be a political question and not one for the military to answer.

**Unknown:** *In your statement you mentioned ITCY a lot and the possibility of warrants do you have any information that something like this may happen?*

**BG Carmony:** I know what I read in the papers and see on T.V. So based on the fact that it is in all the media, I wanted to take this opportunity to remind people that peaceful demonstrations are a part of democracies. And that violent demonstrations can only set the process back.

**Follow-up of above question:** *I would be interested as to specifically what you read in the media or heard in the media?*

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**BG Carmony:** There is quite a bit of speculation that Miss Carl Deleponte has turned over possible indictment, But at this point there is no hard evidence. But again just speculation. So we will all have to wait and see what happens.

**Selim Maligi of Radio 24:** *After the war KFOR has a checkpoint outside of Kamenicha and now it is not there anymore. And maybe for this reason there is time after time many incidents occur. Referring to the last incident that occurred have you thought of returning this check point since the population is in fear, or scared?*

**BG Carmony:** I guess I am not sure what incident we are talking about?

**Selim Maligi:** *I do not know the exact date maybe three weeks or a month ago, some Serbs have some up and blocked the road. And they have said that that part of the road was the property of the border of Serbia.*

**BG Carmony:** There is a part of the paved road that runs up along the ABL and it briefly leaves Kosovo and goes into the other part of Serbia and goes back in. There is a bypass to that road that our KFOR troops were using. But it appeared that the by-pass was not very good and it appeared that in the winter time the road would not be safe for our troops to use. So we were discussing with the forces on the other side of the ABL, the possibility of our forces using the main road on a limited basis. So, as part of that there was survey marks put on the road, to determine where the road went in and out of the boundaries. There is no boundaries being changed or nothing else this was strictly to determine what part of the road was in the boundaries of Kosovo. But it has certainly lead to a lot of speculation in the press. Is there a follow on to make sure you understand this.

**Selim Maligi:** *According to the documents that we have at the town (the ) it says that it is property of Kosovo that it falls under Kosovo. And according to the agreement the border is protected by KFOR, do you think it will be better to return the check point the KFOR check point to where it was to avoid problems in the future?*

**BG Carmony:** The question of where the boundary is, is a political question. We were discussing between the two military forces there, just procedures. With the objective of improving safety and reducing tensions at that part. We are still having those discussions and we have no plans of putting up any more fixed sites or check points at this time.

**Aleksandra Aleksic of DTV:** *If you will allow me I would like to give you a comment based on what we just discussed and after that I will give you a question? You were talking about the border line between Serbia and Kosovo and I live in Kosovo but I consider myself a Serbian because it is one country and since it is the same country why do we need borders? Only in a world without boundaries people can live in a true democracy. And now I would like to ask you a question. If we compare the life of Serbs in Kosovo, if we compare the way people live in 1999 to 2004 we must realize that it is better, and also the safety and security have improved. Do you feel that safety and security would be the same if the total control would be under KPS and the people of*

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*Kosovo, what I mean is if KFOR would not be here and would not have a responsibility to provide?*

**BG Carmony:** In 1999 there were over 50,000 NATO troops in Kosovo. There are now less than 20,000 and we have over 6,000 trained KPS officers now. And since I have been here I have heard more and more positive comments on the ability of KPS to handle the police responsibilities in our area. So it is a continuing process from total military control to I can see some day there will be total civilian control of most law enforcement. And I believe that someday KPS will in fact make all people of Kosovo feel secure. But the fact that there are still NATO troops here means that there are still issues to be worked out and that we are moving forward. Finally I would ask that everyone trust KPS and support them, it is a mutual responsibility to support the force and also to respect them.

**Driton Ramadani or Radio Ferizaj:** *I believe maybe I am the last, I want to take the opportunity in the name of all the journalists that are here, that we can wish Happy new year to the General and MNB(E). And we hope that this cooperation continues in 2005. And I have a short question. In the border between Kosovo and Serbia, on the side of Serbia there have been warnings of the building of a Camp in comparison to Bondsteel, what are your comments on this?*

**BG Carmony:** I have read some of the same accounts, and it does appear that there is some movement of forces within Serbia. So, we do that in America all the time as far as move troops around, so I do not think it is anything to be concerned about. And if they build as nice a camp in Serbia as we have here in Bondsteel, then I know there troops will be very happy.

**Nexhat Xhokli of TV Liria:** *I believe that Driton may have been the last but I would like to take the chance since we are talking about wishing for the holidays, what would be your message for the holidays?*

**BG Carmony:** General Ives De Carmabon the COMKFOR commander came to Bondsteel during Christmas and his message to our Soldiers who are here spending the holidays in Kosovo instead of with their families. That their job is to provide peace here so that this province and the people of Kosovo can move forward into a more peaceful and prosperous future. And if that happens in 2005 then our time here will be well spent.

**Bojan Mladenovic from TV Herc:** *We have some information that in January there will be some detentions or some warrants in Kosovo. Based on your opening statements and what we have talked about today. In case the warrants are not issued do you expect demonstrations and is there a possibility that those demonstrations will turn violent?*

**BG Carmony:** As I mentioned I think the possibility of violence is very low. So we will have to wait and see.